GC

GC(40)/OR.4
9 May 1997
GENERAL Distr.
ENGLISH
Original: FRENCH

International Atomic Energy Agency
GENERAL CONFERENCE

FORTIETH (1996) REGULAR SESSION

RECORD OF THE FOURTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Austria Centre Vienna
on Tuesday, 17 September 1996, at 3.15 p.m.

President: Mr. SURYOKUSUMO (Indonesia)
Later: Mr. PADOLINA (Philippines)

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The composition of delegations attending the session is given in document GC(40)/INF/13/Rev.2.

96-03353 (XXVIII)

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Abbreviations used in this record

ABACC	Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials
AFRA	African Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
ANDRA	(French) National Agency for Radioactive Waste
ANSTO	Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organization
ARCAL	Regional Co-operative Arrangements for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America
Basic Safety Standards	International Basic Safety Standards for Protection against Ionizing Radiation and for the Safety of Radiation Sources
CPF	Country Programme Framework
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
EdF	Electricité de France
G-7	Group of Seven
G-8	Group of Eight
HEU	High-enriched uranium
INES	International Nuclear Event Scale
LWR	Light-water reactor
MOX	Mixed oxide
NEA	Nuclear Energy Agency (of OECD)
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NPT Review and Extension Conference	Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
Pelindaba Treaty	African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty
PHARE	Poland, Hungary: assistance for economic reconstruction in Europe (the programme now covers several East European countries)
PWR	Pressurized water reactor
Quadripartite Agreement	Agreement between the Republic of Argentina, the Federative Republic of Brazil, the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials and the International Atomic Energy Agency for the Application of Safeguards
Rarotonga Treaty	South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty
RCA	Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (for Asia and the Pacific)
RMS	Remote monitoring system
SAGTAC	Standing Advisory Group on Technical Assistance and Co-operation
TCDC	Technical co-operation among developing countries
TCF	Technical Co-operation Fund
Tlatelolco Treaty	Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean
UNSCOM	United Nations Special Commission for the Elimination of Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction

GENERAL DEBATE AND ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1995 (GC(40)/8) (continued)

1. Mr. MINTY (South Africa), having congratulated the President on his election and welcomed the Republic of Moldova as a new member of the Agency, said that one of the most significant events since the previous session of the General Conference had been the signing, on 11 April 1996, of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (the Pelindaba Treaty). Unprecedentedly, on that occasion four nuclear-weapon States had signed Protocols to the Treaty and the fifth had indicated that it would follow suit in the near future. With the signing of the Treaty, the ideal of the denuclearization of the African region had become a reality. South Africa had embarked on the process of parliamentary ratification of the Treaty, which would be followed by the deposition of its instrument of ratification with the Secretary-General of the OAU. It was his conviction that the Treaty would contribute to global disarmament, strengthen the international non-proliferation regime and encourage the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in other parts of the world. He was grateful to the Director General for having organized a special briefing on the Treaty for African Governments; the briefing, held in Cairo in April, had highlighted the benefits of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and technology and had been greatly appreciated.

2. Everyone was aware of the urgent need to make progress towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. South Africa welcomed the recent adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of the CTBT, which accorded well with the efforts which, on the African continent, had culminated in the signing of the Pelindaba Treaty. President Mandela had recently declared that South Africa stood ready to sign the CTBT at the earliest opportunity. Moreover, South Africa would be participating in the worldwide monitoring of compliance with the CTBT and earnestly hoped that there would be no more nuclear test explosions. Adoption of the CTBT was a first step towards attainment of one of the key objectives of the "Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament" adopted at the NPT Review and Extension Conference in 1995. The time had come to move on to other aspects of nuclear disarmament, the ultimate goal being to eliminate all nuclear weapons.

3. South Africa, which welcomed the recent conclusion of further safeguards agreements between the Agency and Member States, would like to see all Member States which had not yet done so entering into comprehensive safeguards agreements. It was very much in favour of strengthening the Agency's safeguards and subscribed to the principles underlying Programme 93+2. A South African delegation had participated in the first session of the Committee on Strengthening the Effectiveness and Improving the Efficiency of the Safeguards System - established by the Board of Governors in June 1996 - and his country was looking forward to the Committee's second session.

4. As regards technical assistance, South Africa, as an African country and a member of the OAU and of the Non-Aligned Movement, would continue with its efforts to ensure that the Agency's activities responded to the needs of developing countries. Technical assistance was, in his view, as important as safeguards - and that should be demonstrated through action. For its part, South Africa would pay its full share of the TCF target for 1997. During the past year it had, in addition, contributed substantial sums - equivalent to more than half of its TCF target share - in support of AFRA activities.

5. The Agency needed to find a solution to the question of creating a much broader base for technical co-operation financing. That was a task in particular for those countries which wished to strengthen technical assistance in accordance with the above-mentioned "Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament". South Africa was therefore pleased to have been entrusted by the Board of Governors with the task of chairing the Informal Working Group on the Financing of Technical Assistance and would endeavour, together with the other members of the Group, to bring about substantial and early progress. It was already playing an active role in AFRA, of which it had served as Chairperson during the past year. In the course of that period, AFRA had readjusted its objectives so as to ensure that the applications of nuclear technology met the needs of end-users on the African continent. More and more experts from South Africa were being made available to the Agency for technical co-operation projects. In a range of disciplines, including regulatory control, South Africa was acting as host to an increasing number of visiting scientists and fellows from developing countries. During the past year, more than

50 African specialists had received practical training at South African nuclear institutions. Also, four training courses had been held in South Africa for more than 50 African participants. Lastly, there were plans to establish, with Agency help, a post-graduate training course on radiation protection at an institution in South Africa; such a course would increase the availability of qualified experts both within South Africa and in the African region as a whole.

6. He welcomed the establishment of a separate Department of Nuclear Safety and endorsed the priority being given to the harmonization of standards in the areas of nuclear, radiation, waste and transport safety. The establishment of an Advisory Commission for Safety Standards had been a positive development, and South Africa was very interested in participating in the work of the supporting advisory committees. His country welcomed the fact that the Convention on Nuclear Safety would be entering into force soon; it had embarked on the procedures for ratifying the Convention, being fully committed to its provisions - and in particular to the principle of competent and independent regulatory control.

7. South Africa was participating actively in the work of the open-ended group of experts which was looking into the technical and legal aspects of a future convention on the safety of radioactive waste management. The need for broad application of such a convention, which would be important for both developed and developing countries, was absolutely clear. South Africa had therefore offered to host the fifth session of the group of experts, to be held in November, with a view to emphasizing the importance of the future convention for the African region; he hoped that many African Member States would participate in that session. Moreover, mindful of the need to ensure comprehensive control of the management of radioactive materials, South Africa had recently embarked on the process of formulating a national radioactive waste management policy; it was expected that a draft text would be ready by the end of the year. Lastly, South African specialists were participating in the work of five of the Agency's standing committees or advisory groups established for the purpose of advising the Director General on strategies for the future.

8. In the short period since its political transformation, South Africa had been able to make a modest but important contribution in a number of areas. It remained committed, as an African country, to helping to promote sustainable development on the African continent and throughout the southern hemisphere. His country was grateful to all members of the international community - and particularly to the Agency, without whose goodwill the progress made would not have been possible. South Africa remained committed also to nuclear disarmament, to non-proliferation and to the achievement of a world free of all weapons of mass destruction. He therefore hoped that in April 1997 the Preparatory Committee for the NPT Review Conference to be held in the year 2000 would bring those objectives closer, so that, through collective efforts, the world might become a safer place for the present generation and for future ones.

9. Mr. d'ESCATHA (France), having welcomed the approval of the Republic of Moldova for Agency membership and congratulated the President on his election, associated himself with the declaration made on behalf of the European Union by the delegate of Ireland.

10. During the NPT Review and Extension Conference, the States parties had undertaken to endeavour to strengthen the Agency's safeguards system, and France was pleased that the first part of Programme 93+2 was already being implemented. However, Programme 93+2 would achieve its objective - the detection of possible prohibited, clandestine nuclear activities - only if the Agency was vested with the necessary information-gathering and investigatory powers. That was why a second set of measures was being examined, on the basis of Secretariat proposals revised in order to take into account comments made by Member States. The draft of a model protocol additional to existing comprehensive safeguards agreements was being examined, and he would like to see the committee in question pursuing its task with determination. For its part, France endorsed the broad lines of the protocol text under consideration; as a nuclear-weapon State, it stood ready to make a substantive contribution to Programme 93+2 by taking appropriate measures to prevent nuclear proliferation beyond its borders. It hoped that those non-nuclear-weapon States which had not concluded comprehensive safeguards

agreements with the Agency would also contribute to the implementation of Programme 93+2.

11. The NPT Review and Extension Conference had called for the conclusion of a treaty banning all nuclear test explosions and also of an agreement to end the production of weapons-grade fissile material. The international community had just taken a crucial step towards the attainment of the first objective, the United Nations General Assembly having adopted the CTBT. France welcomed that fact, since it had participated very actively - especially as the first State to speak out in favour of the zero option - in the negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament which had led, within the agreed timeframe, to the CTBT's adoption, and his country was ready to sign the CTBT on 24 September, the date on which it was to be opened for signature.

12. Without awaiting the outcome of the CTBT negotiations, France had stopped nuclear testing after a final series of six tests. The test site facilities were now being dismantled and, at France's request, the Agency had organized an international scientific mission to assess the radiological situation at the atolls of Mururoa and Fangataufa - a mission which was proceeding well. Also, earlier that year France had signed the three protocols to the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty (the Rarotonga Treaty) and the protocols to the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (the Pelindaba Treaty).

13. An agreement to end the production of weapons-grade fissile material had still to be negotiated. France, which was completely in favour of the conclusion of such an agreement, was already complying with its intent, having ceased to produce weapons-grade plutonium and terminated - in June - the production of weapons-grade HEU.

14. The problems of nuclear security and safety, which were crucial to the future of nuclear power, had been at the heart of the April 1996 Moscow Summit. France, which had presided jointly with the Russian Federation, welcomed the conclusions adopted there, particularly those aimed at improving fissile material controls and accountability, at preventing and combating illicit trafficking in fissile materials and at improving nuclear power plant safety standards and practices. It had been especially pleased about the

reaffirmation of the commitment to fully implement the agreement concluded on 20 December 1995 by the G-7 and Ukraine in support of the latter's decision to close down the Chernobyl nuclear power plant by the year 2000.

15. The Moscow Summit had opened up promising perspectives for co-operation in the safe and efficient management of fissile materials from dismantled nuclear weapons. An international expert meeting, with Agency participation, was to be held in Paris during October for the purpose of reviewing the various options: long-term storage; vitrification; and conversion to MOX fuel for power reactors. France would do its utmost to ensure that the meeting was a success and opened the way for concerted action aimed at the safe management of fissile materials designated as no longer required for defence purposes. Following the call made at the Moscow Summit for greater transparency in the control of plutonium, France's Ministry of Industry had disclosed the quantities of civil plutonium - separated and unseparated - existing in France at the end of 1994 and 1995.

16. World energy demand would increase substantially in the forthcoming decades as a result of economic development in regions of strong population growth. France believed that the increasing demand could not be met in the long run without recourse to nuclear power. In that connection, he recalled that in June the Director General, speaking in Obninsk, had emphasized not only the economic but also the ecological competitiveness of nuclear power as a means of meeting the increasing international demand for energy without the emission of greenhouse gases. However, public confidence, without which there was no future for nuclear power, had to be gained through transparency and high safety levels - a responsibility that lay exclusively with those States which were engaged in nuclear activities.

17. In the crucial area of safety, the Agency was nevertheless also playing an essential role, thanks to its ability to provide States with information and assistance at their request; thus, it had responsibilities as regards the assessment of safety levels in States. In that connection, France was particularly interested in the action being taken by the Agency in assisting countries of Central and Eastern Europe; the Agency should continue its efforts

with a view to a significant upgrading of safety levels in those countries, the adequacy of whose energy supplies should at the same time be ensured.

18. The adoption of international reference standards in the safety area was opening the way to more consistent and stringent safety practices. France, which had participated very actively in the drafting of the Convention on Nuclear Safety, was pleased that it would soon be entering into force. However, that was only a first step. A convention on the safety of radioactive waste management was being prepared, and the group of international experts established for the purpose of producing a draft had held its first meetings. There were still many difficulties to be overcome, and agreement on truly applicable provisions would be reached only if there was consensus regarding their technical, legal and political basis. Such consensus was not beyond reach provided that the principles underlying the Convention on Nuclear Safety were adhered to and the scope of the radioactive waste management convention was clearly specified.

19. On 8 May 1996 the Russian Federation had signed the Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage. Also, on 12 July 1996 Ukraine had decided to become a party to the Convention. It remained for those two countries to translate the Convention's underlying principles into law, but their commitment was already a meaningful step towards universalization of the civil liability regime in question and represented a major statement in support of closer international co-operation, at the political and the industrial level, in the nuclear field.

20. The Agency was making a valuable contribution to the development of peaceful applications of nuclear energy, which was still a widely shared objective - and rightly so. However, the financial resources necessary for the Agency's technical assistance activities had become more difficult to obtain owing to present economic circumstances. The Secretariat had analysed the situation carefully and adopted a courageous approach aimed at improving efficiency; it had tightened up its organizational arrangements, launched further Model Projects and placed still greater emphasis on meeting the true needs of recipient States. Those States also should play an active part in that process, but the Secretariat was

still faced with the considerable task of establishing the most suitable administrative structures. SAGTAC would provide a forum for the necessary in-depth discussions, and its recommendations should be considered with great care.

21. Given the diversity and scope of the Agency's activities and the new tasks being assigned to it, the additional expenditures made necessary in particular by the strengthening of safeguards could not be fully offset, at least in its initial phase, by organizational cost-cutting. That was why France, while appreciating the efforts being made to that end by the Secretariat, was prepared to waive the zero-real-growth principle in the case of the Agency's budget; at the same time, it would like to see all Member States paying their contributions in good time so as to spare the Agency the cash flow problems which it had experienced in the recent past.

22. France now had 54 PWRs in operation and 4 under construction as well as 2 fast breeders. In 1995, its nuclear power plants had generated 360 billion kW·h of electricity - 5% more than in 1994; they had accounted for 81% of Electricité de France's (EdF's) output and for 76% of the total national electricity output. Electricity exports to neighbouring countries had amounted to 74 TW·h, a level at which they were expected to stabilize. As in 1994, the availability of the 54 PWRs had been 81% in 1995. In the light of studies carried out by EdF since 1985, the lifetime of its reactors was estimated to be at least 40 years. A satisfactory safety level had been maintained: 78 events had been classified at level 1 of INES, which comprised 7 levels, and there had been no higher-level events.

23. France's nuclear power generation programme was progressing with the construction of four standardized (N4 series) reactors of entirely French design and characterized by three major innovations: computer-aided controls; Arabelle turbines; and new-generation steam generators. The first of the four reactors had gone critical on 25 July 1996, while the core of the second one had just been fuelled. In addition, France was pursuing, in co-operation with Germany, design work on a "European pressurized water reactor" (EPR). The date for starting with the construction of a first EPR would

depend on future electricity demand, on the competitiveness of the design and on the need to prepare for the renewal of existing plants at the end of their service lives.

24. With regard to the nuclear fuel cycle, the Melox plant for the fabrication of MOX fuel was gradually approaching its nominal capacity of 120 t/year, which could be exceeded in response to demand. At present, seven 900 MW(e) PWRs were using MOX fuel. That type of fuel was to be used in 9 further reactors already licensed for that purpose, and it might ultimately be used in a total of 28 reactors.

25. The reprocessing plants at La Hague had in 1995 run at their nominal capacity of 850 t/year each. Since 1976 nearly 10 000 t of irradiated fuel from LWRs had been reprocessed at La Hague, the final waste, which contained only insignificant amounts of plutonium, being conditioned in the most appropriate ways. The inventory of radioactive waste existing on French territory was regularly updated by the National Agency for Radioactive Waste (ANDRA). Completely accessible for public scrutiny, it categorized the radioactive waste and gave the quantities involved, the activity levels and the storage locations. In his view, all Member States should establish such inventories; that would make for better management, facilitate communications, increase transparency and ensure that radioactive waste remained on record.

26. The research on the management of long-lived radioactive waste, being conducted by the national commission established for that purpose in 1991, was proceeding on schedule, the areas covered being: waste separation and transmutation; waste conditioning and long-term storage above ground; and retrievable or non-retrievable storage in deep geological formations, with the construction of underground laboratories. With regard to the last-mentioned area, after preliminary studies conducted during the previous two years, the French Government had authorized ANDRA to apply for construction and operating licences for underground laboratories at three sites (two in clay and one in granite). The number of laboratories and their location would be decided upon after consultations with local elected officials and public inquiries, which would take about 18 months.

27. The committee of experts appointed to advise on the ability of Superphénix to serve as a research tool had just concluded that the reactor offered great scope for studies relating to reactor operations, safety, plutonium consumption and the transmutation of long-lived waste. At Cadarache, the Commissariat à l'énergie atomique's radiation protection and nuclear safety institute (IPSN) had in July carried out the second experiment under the Phébus programme of international research into serious accidents at nuclear power plants with PWRs. The programme was being conducted by IPSN in association with EdF, the European Commission, the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission and scientific organizations in Japan, Canada and the Republic of Korea. It was being funded from a budget amounting to about a billion French francs and was scheduled to last ten years.

28. In conclusion, he said that the main lines of France's nuclear policy accorded in many respects with the Agency's objectives and that France, whose actions had an important international dimension, considered the role of the Agency to be essential and would continue to support the Agency and to participate in its activities.

29. Ms. LAJOUS VARGAS (Mexico), having congratulated the President of the General Conference on his election and welcomed the Republic of Moldova to the Agency, said her delegation was pleased that a safeguards agreement had been concluded between the Government of Chile and the Agency and that one was soon to be concluded between the Czech Republic and the Agency.

30. On 26 July 1996, she had had the honour to deposit, on behalf of her country, an instrument of ratification of the Convention on Nuclear Safety; the requisite number of instruments thereby being attained, the Convention would be entering into force soon. Mexico had thus demonstrated the high priority which it attached to safety in all activities connected with the peaceful utilization of nuclear energy. However, it believed that measures designed to strengthen nuclear safety should be accompanied by measures designed to end nuclear weapons testing and by the dismantling of all weapons of mass destruction. The Convention's entry into force would help to reassure public opinion, but it would have little meaning if certain countries persisted in refusing to embark on the path

of nuclear disarmament. The wish to move in the right direction did exist, however, as the recent adoption of the CTBT by the United Nations General Assembly had shown; that decision had highlighted the worldwide desire to advance the process of nuclear disarmament and prevent the qualitative, quantitative and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons. Mexico would therefore like all Member States which had not yet signed and ratified the Convention on Nuclear Safety to do so as soon as possible.

31. For several years, Member States had been focusing on the very important question of strengthening the effectiveness and improving the efficiency of safeguards under Programme 93+2. Mexico had supported that programme from the outset and had participated actively in work relating to its technical and legal aspects, constantly demonstrating its readiness to participate in field trials of proposed measures. It had welcomed the establishment of the Committee on Strengthening the Effectiveness and Improving the Efficiency of the Safeguards System and would participate actively in its next session.

32. The Agency's safeguards activities were making an effective contribution to international peace and security; the additional protocol for reinforcing some of the measures provided for in the NPT would undoubtedly strengthen the non-proliferation regime and help to create the climate of confidence necessary for achieving complete nuclear disarmament. Every State should consider, in the light of its place in the international scheme of things, what it could do in order to help bring about the earliest possible completion of the work on drafting the protocol. The future of all peoples was at stake. It should be emphasized in that connection that the protocol was not likely to be finalized if a disproportionate burden was placed on the non-nuclear-weapon States possessing nuclear industries and if consensus solutions were not arrived at with regard to issues such as confidentiality, complementary access and respect for sovereignty. Many States would find it difficult to accept safeguards measures which other States were unwilling to accept. Nevertheless, Mexico was confident that the Agency's objectives would prevail and that an effective instrument would soon be in place.

33. Another important question was that of amending Article VI of the Agency's Statute. In resolution GC(39)/RES/21, the General Conference had in 1995 requested the Board of Governors to continue consultations with Member States and submit recommendations to the General Conference for approval at its 1996 session. It was clear from the reports presented by the Ambassadors of Denmark and Japan that substantial progress had been made, and her delegation also was of the view that the question could be resolved soon; given the changes which had taken place recently on the international scene, Member States should, in a spirit of compromise, endeavour to overcome their differences and arrive at a solution which would provide the Agency with a truly representative Board of Governors.

34. Mexico had always been a supporter of the Agency's technical co-operation activities, of partnership in development and of technical co-operation among developing countries, which it would like to see strengthened. However, that would require additional resources. She therefore urged Member States to contribute to the TCF in accordance with the TCF targets and to pay the 8% assessed programme costs due on the Agency technical assistance received by them. Mexico, which was pleased with the results achieved through Agency technical co-operation and partnership in development, congratulated the Department of Technical Co-operation on the high implementation rate attained in the previous year - thanks in particular to overprogramming. Also, it was grateful to the Secretariat for promoting technical co-operation among developing countries - to which it attached great importance, as it did to the concept of partnership between the Agency and Member States - and was participating actively in most of the 17 ARCAL projects currently under way by hosting regional seminars and making specialists available for missions within the region. The Mexican authorities would continue to collaborate actively with the Agency, offering the services of experts and possibilities for group or individual training.

35. As the Agency had emphasized on many occasions with regard to Model Projects, it was important that nuclear techniques yield economic and social benefits for the end-user. An example of how that principle was being put into practice was a National Nuclear Research Institute project involving the installation in the near future of a cyclotron at

Mexico's Nuclear Centre and of one at the University City. The first would be used for the production of radioisotopes with intermediate and short half-lives, and the other would operate in conjunction with a positron emission tomography system.

36. Her delegation hoped that the results achieved would encourage the Secretariat to pursue its efforts to strengthen technical co-operation, taking into account the useful recommendations made by SAGTAC. That having been said, as was clear from the Director General's report on the matter, it should be possible to find new financing sources external to the Agency. The Secretariat should intensify its efforts in that connection; in fact, perhaps the Secretariat could be authorized to assign the responsibility for those efforts to a number of its senior officials.

37. Technical co-operation could not expand without rapid information exchange. The Secretariat had made remarkable progress in that respect through access to Internet services and through its 1995-96 information technology plan, which should result in enhanced electronic communications with other organizations and with Member States. Such initiatives were extremely useful and should be extended. Appreciable savings of time and money would be possible if not only technical co-operation project proposals, but also fellowship, scientific visit and training course requests were submitted in electronic form. Moreover, electronic communications should be employed not only by the Department of Technical Co-operation, but also by other Departments of the Secretariat, to make the numerous working documents exchanged between the Agency and Member States available in electronic form.

38. In many countries, nuclear technologies did not have a very good public image - a major obstacle to the formulation of technically sound projects of undoubted potential benefit to the public. Consequently, Mexico was still endeavouring to improve that image. In May 1996, a seminar on "Atoms for development" sponsored by the National Nuclear Research Institute and the Agency had been held in Mexico; attended by over 500 persons, the seminar had made abundantly clear the way in which nuclear technologies were benefiting Mexico and the world as a whole. During the visit which he had paid to Mexico

on that occasion, the Director General had met the Mexican President, who had expressed his wish to see the peaceful utilization of nuclear energy in Mexico further expanded.

39. Mexico had great confidence in the Agency and attached great importance to the work of the General Conference. The international community longed for security and could not content itself with words and empty promises. On the one hand, however, there were States unwilling to share the advantages which they enjoyed; on the other, there were States with nothing to share but their patience. As long as that situation existed, it would be impossible to overcome the differences. The future being uncertain for all, including the Agency, she would like delegations to be open-minded and to join together in a sincere effort to arrive at results consistent with the aspirations of the great majority of nations.

40. Mr. EL-FEKI (Egypt), welcoming the Republic of Moldova as a new member of the Agency, said that in 1996, twenty-two years after adoption of the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa, the Pelindaba Treaty on a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa had been signed in Cairo. Underlining that, as indicated in the preamble of the Pelindaba Treaty, the establishment of other nuclear-weapon-free zones, especially in the Middle East, would enhance the security of States Parties, he thanked the Agency for its contribution to the preparation of the final text and hoped that signature of the Treaty would help increase co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy between the Agency and the African Commission on Nuclear Energy, whose headquarters were in South Africa.

41. Peace and security in the Middle East region should be based on the principle of equal rights and obligations at a minimum level of armaments. The presence of an unsafeguarded nuclear programme on its eastern borders posed a very serious threat to Egypt. Egypt's standpoint was not based on opposition to any particular State but on the conviction that elimination of weapons of mass destruction was in the interest of all the peoples of the region. It was in that spirit that Egypt had been advocating, since 1974, the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and had launched, in 1990, an initiative to make the region a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, including

nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. To that end it had proposed that formal multilateral negotiations be entered into and that all the States of the region accede to the international instruments pertaining to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction within the time it would take to conclude peace agreements between Israel and the other parties in the peace process.

42. Egypt considered that the application of full-scope Agency safeguards to the Middle East would be an extremely important step giving momentum to efforts to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region. That objective also had the support of the international community. The following examples, in addition to the elements highlighted in the Director General's report, bore witness to that. The NPT Review and Extension Conference had adopted, by consensus, a resolution on the Middle East, in which it noted with concern the continued existence in the Middle East of unsafeguarded nuclear facilities, urged non-parties to the Treaty which operated such facilities to accept full-scope Agency safeguards and called on all States in the Middle East to take practical steps in appropriate forums aimed at making progress towards the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction. Likewise, the Cairo Declaration, adopted on the occasion of the signature of the Pelindaba Treaty, emphasized that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, especially in regions of tension such as the Middle East, enhanced global and regional peace and security. The statement made by the Presidency of the European Union on the occasion of the signature of the Pelindaba Treaty also fully reflected that view.

43. In spite of that international support, it appeared from the Director General's report contained in document GC(40)/6, that no tangible progress had been made in that regard. The report pointed out that while most States of the region wanted full-scope Agency safeguards to be applied to all nuclear activities in the Middle East pursuant to accession to the NPT or through the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone, one State believed that the application of safeguards or the establishment of such a zone should follow the conclusion of a comprehensive peace agreement in the Middle East. Egypt felt that peace

in the Middle East would ensue once the nuclear and disarmament issues had been settled and measures to ensure the transparency of nuclear programmes had been adopted.

44. Egypt considered it certainly worthwhile for the Agency to participate in the activities of the multilateral working group on arms control and regional security within the framework of the multilateral Middle East negotiations, but also essential that it continue to make efforts to apply full-scope safeguards in the region. It therefore urged the Agency to adopt determined measures, including the organization of dedicated workshops to review the technical modalities and procedures to free the Middle East from nuclear weapons.

45. The application of full-scope safeguards, while fundamentally serving the cause of nuclear weapons non-proliferation, also strengthened mutual confidence in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and nuclear safety. Any mystery shrouding nuclear installations and activities aroused the concern of the governments and peoples of the region, as shown by the fears instigated by information of Israeli origin that there had been radioactive leakage from nuclear waste from the Dimona reactor in April 1996. Those fears were due to the total lack of transparency, of international supervision and of safeguards. Nuclear safety was of increased importance in that regard, as shown by the fact that a summit conference on that topic had been organized in Moscow in April 1996. Similarly, the G-7 at their meeting in Lyon had underlined that nuclear safety should take precedence over all other considerations.

46. With regard to Part 2 of Programme 93+2, Egypt considered that the final text of the proposals should be formulated in such a way as to avoid as far as possible encroachment by the safeguards system on non-nuclear spheres and on research and development activities, and to ensure that the right of States to take advantage of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy was not undermined. In order to be effective, that system should be applied in an objective and non-discriminatory fashion and, furthermore, it should ensure the transparency of the nuclear programmes of all countries. He pointed out that the placing of new responsibilities and obligations only on States with full-scope safeguards agreements might encourage certain States to maintain non-comprehensive

safeguards agreements, which would not only run counter to nuclear arms non-proliferation but also be politically untenable.

47. With regard to the CTBT just adopted by the General Assembly, Egypt believed, despite reservations it had about certain paragraphs, that the final text of the Treaty offered an acceptable basis. Thus, as reiterated on several occasions by Egypt's President and Minister of Foreign Affairs, his country was prepared to sign the Treaty as soon as Israel had. In view of all those developments, it was important that the Agency expand the composition of the Board of Governors. That matter was even more pressing now that the number of Member States had increased considerably. Recalling resolution GC(XXV)/RES/389, adopted by consensus, which pointed out that Africa was under-represented on the Board, he stressed that there was a need to remedy that situation and that the reservations expressed by certain delegations in the early stages of negotiations were no longer valid. Expansion of the Board would enable increased participation by States, particularly developing States, in the Agency's activities, thereby strengthening its moral and political authority and increasing its effectiveness.

48. Egypt was pursuing efforts to make use of nuclear technologies in its development programmes. Thus, the Egyptian Atomic Energy Commission was about to commission a gamma irradiator for use in the preservation of foodstuffs. Likewise, a multipurpose 22 MW research reactor was due to go into service by the end of 1997. In addition, nuclear power remained one of the most important options open to Egypt, which was also continuing to prospect for nuclear raw materials and other materials linked to the fuel cycle.

49. The peaceful uses of nuclear energy opened new perspectives in economic development. Egypt therefore felt the Agency had an important role to play in technical co-operation and the transfer of technology. Egypt, which always paid more than its share of the target for voluntary contributions to the TCF, also hoped to be able to co-operate with the Agency in establishing a Model Project. It considered that training was very important and was therefore organizing training programmes in the peaceful uses of nuclear

energy for the benefit of African and Arab countries. It was grateful to the Agency for the activities it was carrying out under AFRA, and called on Member States to continue supporting technical co-operation projects.

50. Mr. BOERSNER STEDER (Venezuela) commended the Director General and the entire Secretariat on their excellent work, presented in document GC(40)/8 and skilfully summarized by the Director General in his introductory statement. He endorsed what the Director General had said about the constant renewal and reorientation of the Agency's activities and the crucial importance of human development. He also fully agreed with the need to strive for maximum administrative efficiency and wider and more democratic participation by all Governments. The Director General had been right in pointing out that co-operation among developing countries had increased in 1995-96.

51. In the year since the 39th session of the General Conference there had been many important events in the field of atomic energy. Venezuela had followed with great interest the progress of the Geneva negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. While regretting that a consensus had not yet been achieved on the text, he hoped that the parties concerned would do their best to bring their positions closer together in order that the treaty could be signed as speedily as possible. That instrument, which should be both effective and attract wide participation, was a further step towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

52. Having noted with satisfaction the process of consolidation of the Tlatelolco Treaty, he pledged Venezuela's support and co-operation for development of the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in the nuclear-weapon-free zone of Latin America and the Caribbean in the interests of the people of the region.

53. Venezuela congratulated the African countries on having established a nuclear-weapon-free zone under the Pelindaba Treaty, and also the States of South-East Asia on the signing of the Bangkok Treaty to establish another nuclear-weapon-free zone. It hoped that those initiatives would stimulate the negotiation and adoption of similar instruments for further geographic zones, especially in the Middle East and other regions where there was political tension.

54. For the Agency to perform more effectively its important tasks in nuclear safety and safeguards as well as technical assistance and co-operation, there was a need, as the Director General had said in his introductory statement, for increased administrative effectiveness and flexibility and proper democratic participation by the greatest number of countries in decision-making and implementation. From that standpoint, amendment of Article VI of the Statute was extremely important.

55. The Board of Governors should be expanded to allow better representation of countries from all the geographical areas. The developing countries would be better able to fulfil their obligations to the Agency if they were represented more equitably on the Board. Venezuela had examined the various proposals put forward during the consultations which had taken place pursuant to resolution GC(39)/RES/21 and its position could be summarized as follows:

1. The Board of Governors should be enlarged on the basis of criteria ensuring democratic representation of the various geographical areas;

2. Any increase in the composition of the Board should not affect the current levels of representation of the various areas;

3. Account should also be taken of the real progress achieved in nuclear science and technology by certain countries within the various areas.

56. With regard to personnel questions, reported in document GOV/2876-GC(40)/18, the progress made in respect of the representation of the developing countries and of women on the Agency's professional and technical staff was welcome. The sincere efforts of the Director General and the Secretariat to make further advances in that area were also welcome. The recruitment of professional staff posed the same type of problem as that encountered in connection with the composition of the Board of Governors, namely, how to reconcile the principle of recruitment on a wide basis with that of administrative and technical excellence. As a developing country with a growing number of highly qualified specialists and technical staff of both sexes, Venezuela urged the Director General and the Secretariat to continue their efforts to increase further the proportion of specialist staff from

the developing regions. It would also welcome any progress in the representation of women in the Secretariat, especially women from the developing countries.

57. A valuable aspect of the Agency's activities over the past year had been its information and training activities. Particularly worthy of note in the Latin American and Caribbean region had been a safeguards seminar in Jamaica in April 1996, and another seminar on atoms for development held in Mexico in June.

58. Venezuela was receiving much valuable technical assistance from the Agency and wished to make a greater contribution through its own professional and technical staff to the implementation of Agency-supported national and regional programmes and projects. It was currently the beneficiary of one of the most important Model Projects dealing with water resources, entitled "Groundwater Resources in the Caracas Valley". As in other large cities in Latin America, the population of Venezuela's capital city had risen sharply over the years and every year during the dry season its water supply dropped to precarious levels. Although extensive work was being carried out to increase the existing surface water supply, it was becoming increasingly necessary to draw on the groundwater resources. The work carried out in co-operation with the Agency was producing very positive results and the Caracas Valley experience would doubtless be put to good use by other countries in the Latin American region and other developing regions.

59. Under the ARCAL programme, Venezuela was currently taking part in 10 regional projects on, inter alia, veterinary science, nuclear analytical techniques, the production of radiopharmaceuticals and the industrial application of nuclear techniques. The regional project ARCAL XVIII (RLA/8/018) entitled "Tracer techniques in dam leakage" had been particularly useful to the country, enabling it to save some US $15 million over the past year. In addition, Venezuela was implementing 11 national projects in co-operation with the Agency, principally in the areas of agriculture, stockbreeding, medicine, pharmaceutical science, radiology, engineering, industry and environmental protection. For the 1996-98 biennium, a further 6 national projects had been submitted to the Agency for approval.

60. In conclusion, the Venezuelan delegation reaffirmed its unreserved support for the Agency in its efforts to perform its safeguards and technical co-operation activities in a balanced manner. It was very appreciative of the Agency's efforts to strengthen and intensify its co-operation with the developing countries and grateful to the Agency for the valuable assistance it was giving to Venezuela in implementing regional and national projects of great social and economic significance. Venezuela would make every effort to fulfil its commitments to the Agency.

Mr. Padolina (Philippines) took the Chair.

61. Mr. STUB (Norway), having welcomed the Republic of Moldova to the Agency, said that nuclear testing placed a great strain on international non-proliferation and disarmament efforts and represented a threat to health and the environment. The reactions to the nuclear tests carried out the previous year had clearly shown that world opinion was strongly opposed to their continuation.

62. A universal commitment to the banning of all nuclear test explosions was of paramount importance. Norway was pleased therefore that the United Nations General Assembly had overwhelmingly supported the CTBT the previous week. It was disappointed that a few countries continued to defy world opinion by preventing the entry into force of the Treaty and urged them to join in the common ultimate aim of a comprehensive test ban.

63. In 1995 the General Conference had requested the Director General to continue to develop measures proposed under Programme 93+2 for strengthening the effectiveness and improving the efficiency of the safeguards system. Norway strongly supported that work and welcomed the Director General's report. Norway called on all States to co-operate with the Agency in order for drafting of a model protocol to be completed as soon as possible. Agency safeguards could promote greater confidence among States and thereby contribute to common security.

64. His delegation welcomed the Secretariat's initiatives to combat illicit trafficking in nuclear materials and other radioactive sources through prevention, response, training and

the exchange of information. Norway actively supported efforts to strengthen physical protection, accounting for and control of nuclear material, and border controls. The Agency had been represented at a meeting held in June 1996 in Norway where those issues had been discussed by representatives of the nuclear safety authorities, the police forces and the customs departments of Russia, Sweden and Norway.

65. One of the world's highest concentrations of civilian and military nuclear installations and activities was located just across the Norwegian-Russian border. Norway therefore had a strong interest in safety levels at nuclear installations and in the safe management of radioactive waste and spent fuel. His Government had launched an action plan in 1995 for strengthening co-operation with Russia and other countries in nuclear safety and radioactive waste management. Some $35 million had been allocated for that purpose over the previous two years. The initiative was well under way and Norway intended to maintain a high level of support for the plan's implementation. All parties involved seemed to appreciate that a further development of that co-operation, in a spirit of openness and trust, was in the interest of all.

66. A major part of the Norwegian assistance programme was focusing on safety enhancement and risk reduction at the Kola nuclear power plant until such time as the reactors could be shut down. In particular, the two oldest of the four reactors were giving rise to serious concern in northern Norway. In the interest of health and the environment, those and other reactors that could not achieve a satisfactory safety level should be closed as soon as possible.

67. In her statement, the delegate of the United States had referred to President Clinton's call to deal with the problems inherited from the Cold War. In that context, one of the most promising areas of Norwegian-Russian co-operation dealt with the environmental aspects of the dismantling of decommissioned Russian nuclear submarines from the Northern Fleet. Of special interest were the transport, handling and storage of spent fuel from those submarines. Some of the projects could be carried out jointly by

Norway and the Russian Federation. For others, the participation of third parties would be welcome, particularly as they were a legacy of the Cold War.

68. The Agency had played a very constructive role in promoting nuclear safety worldwide. Norway was particularly pleased about the adoption of the Convention on Nuclear Safety. It had been among the first countries to sign and ratify the Convention, which would enter into force the following month, and urged those which had not yet signed or ratified it to do so without delay.

69. Norway, which had a particular interest in the safe management of radioactive waste and spent fuel, was taking an active part in the drafting of a radioactive waste convention. The aim was as comprehensive a convention as possible covering all types of radioactive waste and spent fuel in the civil and military sectors.

70. His country agreed that spent fuel could be recycled and should not *per se* be regarded as waste; that would be taken into account in the text. The draft convention addressed safety above all. The risk to the population from spent fuel was as great as that from high-level waste. Thus, there was no reason to exclude spent fuel from the scope of the convention; it constituted a radiation hazard and a potential source of contamination however each country cared to define it.

71. Norway had noted with satisfaction that the participants at the Moscow Nuclear Safety and Security Summit had given an absolute priority to nuclear safety. On the other hand, it was disappointing that no specific reference had been made to increased international co-operation in waste management, including the need for an international funding mechanism.

72. The Arctic was a particularly vulnerable environment. Norway was looking forward to receiving in 1997 the results of the Agency's International Arctic Seas Assessment Project to study the consequences of past dumping by the Soviet Union of radioactive material. A considerable amount of data had been collected, including the results of joint Norwegian-Russian expeditions. It appeared that contamination from the dumped material was extremely low and could be measured only in the immediate vicinity

of the dumping sites. There were, however, measurable levels of artificial radionuclides in the waters, sediments and biota of the open sea; they were attributable to fallout from atmospheric nuclear tests, marine transport of effluents from European reprocessing plants, especially Sellafield, marine transport of radionuclides from the Chernobyl accident, and transport by the rivers Ob and Yenisei. His country was currently working with the Russian Federation to establish a joint surveillance and monitoring programme. Norway was less concerned about the waste that had already been dumped than by spent fuel and radioactive waste that might contaminate the marine environment in future unless preventive action were taken.

73. In order to increase international co-operation and co-ordination Norway had participated in the establishment of a consultative mechanism for radioactive waste management projects in the Russian Federation. A Contact Expert Group had now been created under the auspices of the Agency to co-ordinate international efforts, to avoid duplication, to stimulate the development of realistic projects by the Russian partners and in general to increase awareness of co-operation possibilities with Russia in that field. The first meeting of the Group had been held in Moscow in March and a second meeting in Vienna the previous week. Norway would encourage interested parties to take an active part in the forum.

74. In conclusion, he stressed that nuclear energy posed many risks and should be properly understood and managed. Norway remained convinced of the importance of the Agency's work and its capabilities with regard to non-proliferation, nuclear and radiation safety and technical assistance.

75. Mr. HALIM (Sudan), after welcoming approval of the Republic of Moldova for Agency membership, said that in recent years the Agency had implemented numerous projects in the Sudan in such areas as medicine, food, agriculture, zootechnics and animal reproduction. It had also co-operated with Sudan in other areas such as groundwater prospecting, radiation protection, environmental monitoring, equipment maintenance and training of local and regional personnel. It was vital in that connection for the Agency to

establish the proper balance between its technical assistance programmes and its safeguards programmes. It was time to implement resolution GC(XXV)/RES/388 adopted by the General Conference in 1981, which called for the necessary measures to be taken so that technical assistance was funded through the Regular Budget of the Agency or through other comparably predictable and assured resources. Provision must therefore be made for a greater inflow of funds into the TCF so that the Agency could provide the developing countries with more substantial support.

76. To strengthen the effectiveness and improve the efficiency of the safeguards system, it was essential that all countries concerned should submit their nuclear facilities to Agency safeguards. A formula must also be found whereby the Agency's need for information could be reconciled with the need of States to protect their legitimate rights while abiding by their constitutional obligations. With regard to the Middle East in particular, the international community must work to persuade Israel to accede to the NPT and submit its nuclear installations to international inspection so that the Agency could apply safeguards to all countries in the region. The radioactive leaks from the Israeli reactor at Dimona were an evil omen that made such action all the more necessary.

77. Sudan was proud to see that the African continent had become a nuclear-weapon-free zone. In that connection, the extension of the NPT for an indefinite period could have served as a guarantee for the subsequent conversion of the Middle East region into a nuclear-weapon-free zone had not Israel remained beyond the pale of international legality by refusing to accede to the Treaty and submit its nuclear installations to the safeguards system. Such a situation demanded a firm stance by the international community in order to persuade Israel to change its attitude. Sudan therefore supported the draft resolution on that subject submitted by the Arab States group.

78. With regard to the amendment of Article VI of the Statute, he said that the Agency had been invited, in resolution GC(XXV)/RES/389, to give due consideration to the request of developing countries, particularly those belonging to the areas of Africa and of the Middle East and South Asia, for an increase in their representation on the Board of

Governors. Some maintained that an enlargement of the composition of the Board of Governors might reduce its efficiency. Sudan, for its part, considered that a larger Board would be more efficient. It had therefore co-sponsored a draft resolution on the subject in the hope of helping the General Conference to solve the problem.

79. With regard to document GC(40)/11 on the composition of regional groups, the Sudanese delegation considered that the division of the question of the amendment of Article VI into two parts (a) and (b) was an attempt at obfuscation. The two issues should not be considered jointly and only part (a) should be retained. The question of the composition of regional groups should be decided by the groups themselves inasmuch as the practices of other United Nations organizations showed that it was not possible in all cases to take geographical location as the sole criterion; instead there was a tendency to take political and other identity-related factors into consideration.

80. With regard to personnel questions, while the report showed that a large proportion of candidates from developing countries were considered to be highly qualified, the recruitment objectives were far from being attained. As to the representation of women in the Secretariat, a matter to which Sudan gave particular attention, the fact was that little progress had been made despite the determination of the Secretariat and the Director General to implement the relevant General Conference resolution. That was a situation which must be remedied at all costs.

81. Mr. PESCI BOUREL (Argentina) said that his Government's firm commitment to the international community's nuclear non-proliferation efforts had been clearly demonstrated in previous years by Argentina's agreement with Brazil on the exclusively peaceful utilization of nuclear energy, by the Quadripartite Agreement, Argentina's ratification of the Tlatelolco Treaty and the NPT, and its accession to the Nuclear Suppliers' Group.

82. Buenos Aires had had the honour of hosting the annual plenary meeting of the Nuclear Suppliers' Group in April 1996 where important decisions aimed at strengthening

the Group's activities had been taken and Brazil, Ukraine and the Republic of Korea had been welcomed as new members.

83. Convinced that States should fulfil their obligations pursuant to Article IV of the NPT, Argentina had established a rigorous national system to control exports of nuclear material, equipment and technologies, and was also an active participant in the plenary meetings of the Zangger Committee.

84. His Government was completely satisfied with the way in which the Common Argentine-Brazilian System of Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials had functioned over the previous year and with the important activities, linked to implementation of the Quadripartite Agreement with the Agency, carried out within the framework of ABACC.

85. With regard to the exclusively peaceful utilization of nuclear energy at the national level, Argentina continued to focus on support for national economic and social development policies and the national nuclear institutions had continued to function effectively.

86. Nuclear power had accounted for 13% of national electricity production and the load factor of nuclear power plants had surpassed 90%. That major achievement was due to the high quality of the Argentine supplies, especially the fuel elements and heavy water which were entirely produced in the country.

87. The National Atomic Energy Commission had finished preparing its technology development plan for the next decade, which gave priority to the strengthening of nuclear power generation, the production of fissile material, social applications of nuclear energy, and activities related to radioactive waste management and the dismantling of facilities.

88. Development of a low power nuclear reactor had continued; thermohydraulic testing had been conducted and the neutron test facility was about to become operational. With regard to research reactors, the construction of the third Argentine reactor for export was proceeding as planned.

89. The nuclear medicine school in the Mendoza province was fully operational. Its up-to-date equipment included a positron emission tomograph combined with a cyclotron for the production of short-lived radioisotopes. Those facilities were available to all countries engaged in nuclear medicine activities.

90. Argentina attached great importance to the strengthening of regulatory systems for radiological and nuclear safety. The post-graduate course on radiation protection and nuclear safety, which was supported by the Agency, was a significant contribution in that respect. Furthermore, the national nuclear regulatory organization had continued to develop standards and had been permanently monitoring two operating nuclear power reactors and one under construction, two research accelerators, seven research and radioisotope production reactors and more than 1500 centres using radioactive materials or ionizing radiation. It had also continued to meet its safeguards responsibilities by developing remote monitoring and environmental monitoring systems for the detection of clandestine activities.

91. Those were but a few examples clearly illustrating that, in the two years since the beginning of its restructuring process, the Argentine nuclear sector had been developing its specific activities to the full and with its characteristic efficiency.

92. Argentina continued fully to support the Agency's technical co-operation activities by making available to the Agency numerous scientific experts and by training an increasing number of fellowship holders of different nationalities. In that connection, he reaffirmed his country's support for the ARCAL programme, and in particular the Secretariat's considerable efforts in recent months, in co-operation with countries of the region, to bring that programme up to date. Argentina would continue contributing to the TCF as in the past.

93. With regard to the strengthening of the safeguards system, Argentina had begun to implement together with the Secretariat the Part 1 measures of Programme 93+2 in its nuclear facilities. The negotiations on Part 2 of the Programme should be brought to a successful conclusion as soon as possible and he therefore urged all the States participating

in the work of the Committee on Strengthening the Effectiveness and Improving the Efficiency of the Safeguards System to increase their efforts to reach a constructive consensus soonest.

94. His Government attached fundamental importance to the strengthening of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime through the modernization of the Agency's safeguards system which should be able to detect undeclared activities in Member States. For that modernization to be effective, it was essential that the Agency's new safeguards system be universal in nature and therefore totally independent of the type of agreement which countries had concluded with the Agency.

95. Argentina was particularly pleased that the Convention on Nuclear Safety was due to enter into force on 24 October 1996. His Government had begun the necessary procedures in the National Congress for ratification of the Convention and he hoped that the matter would be settled shortly.

96. At the same time, Argentina continued to participate actively in the expert group responsible for drafting a convention on the safety of radioactive waste management. It welcomed the results achieved thus far and hoped that a consensus would soon be reached on the outstanding issues.

97. His Government had participated from the outset in the work of the Standing Committee on Liability for Nuclear Damage and hoped that the Committee would bring its negotiations to a successful conclusion by the end of the year, developing both a draft protocol to amend the Vienna Convention and drafting a convention on supplementary funding which was truly universal in nature.

98. Finally, on behalf of his Government, he welcomed the Republic of Moldova as a new member of the Agency. He commended the Director General and the Secretariat as a whole on their work and professionalism, which were reflected in the satisfactory results achieved in the various areas of Agency activity.

99. Mr. PUCCIO HUIDOBRO (Chile), after congratulating the Republic of Moldova on obtaining approval for membership of the Agency and expressing his gratitude to the Director General and all his staff, stated that Chile had recently concluded an NPT safeguards agreement with the Agency, which was shortly to enter into force. It had thus discharged one of the obligations incumbent on it as a party to the NPT.

100. His Government had strongly supported the resolution by which the United Nations General Assembly had approved and opened for signature the CTBT and welcomed the fact that the Treaty's secretariat would have its seat in Vienna.

101. More specifically, where the Agency's field of competence was concerned, the Government of Chile had submitted the Convention on Nuclear Safety to its National Congress for consideration and was optimistic that ratification would take place soon. He had been pleased to learn that the Convention was shortly to enter into force. Chile, which had also been following with interest work on the preparation of new standards on liability for nuclear damage and on the safe management of radioactive waste, hoped that those efforts would soon lead to the adoption and entry into force of the relevant international instruments.

102. Two considerations of crucial importance, not only for Chile but also for the Agency and Member States, which had guided his country's activities were the strengthening of instruments to guarantee the peaceful use of nuclear energy and the strengthening of technological development activities. Chile believed that the peaceful use of nuclear energy should be ensured by effective safeguards measures, and it was for that reason that it had strongly supported Programme 93+2, to which it attached great importance. His country, in line with its policy of pacifism, would continue to make every effort to support instruments which had an effective and rational contribution to make in that area.

103. It was equally important for Chile that nuclear energy should be utilized under conditions which guaranteed the safety of individuals and the protection of the

environment. That was why, with Agency support, it had constructed a radioactive waste treatment plant which enabled it to comply with current standards at reasonable cost.

104. He welcomed initiatives for the utilization of advanced rapid communication technologies, including the linking of the Secretariat and Member State Missions through the Internet. He hoped that that programme, which he regarded as successful, would be developed further in the future.

105. His delegation also welcomed recent steps taken by the Agency to strengthen its technical co-operation activities. The setting up of SAGTAC by the Director General was an extremely important initiative, and Chile was pleased to have been invited to take part in the Group's work.

106. Chile attached particular importance to the Agency's technical co-operation activities and was concerned that they make an effective contribution to meeting the real needs of countries, and also that the expected benefits of the projects surpass those offered by other formulas in the same time and at the same cost.

107. Global political and economic changes over the past few years had meant that the mechanisms and concepts governing relations between Member States and the Agency in the context of technical co-operation had to be fundamentally revised. The concept of technical co-operation now implied a higher level of participation and commitment on the part of recipient countries, with greater responsibility on their part both in the choice of subjects and in the planning and execution of projects, thereby lightening the heavy and costly administrative burden borne by the Agency and freeing funds which could be more usefully employed in actual transfer of technology activities. Chile was not arguing that the concept of technical assistance should be abolished, rather that it should be adapted to today's world by aiding countries which were on the threshold of development and by actively encouraging a gradual handover of responsibilities.

108. The strengthening of technical co-operation was a concept which was not confined to mere financial considerations. It implied a radical change of attitude by both the Agency and recipient countries. That was the only way of ensuring that technical co-operation

projects had a real impact on national socio-economic development programmes. On that basis, Chile had successfully carried out a fruit fly elimination programme, which had had considerable economic repercussions for the fruit export sector.

109. Implementation of the ARCAL programme had enabled Chile to obtain an overview of existing capabilities, and to establish the links needed to initiate co-operation activities in a region where differences in levels of nuclear development offered good prospects for horizontal co-operation. The advisory services of experts from Latin America and the Caribbean were increasingly being sought by countries of the region under both the ARCAL programme and the Agency's regular technical co-operation programme. What had been stated in regard to technical co-operation was also valid for the ARCAL programme. Chile believed, based on its own experience, that projects implemented under the ARCAL programme should be linked to the country's overall economic and social system from their inception.

110. In conclusion, he wished the General Conference every success, particularly at a time of difficult challenges demanding a continued search for co-operation and consensus.

111. Mr. ZENARI (Holy See) recalled that Pope John Paul II, when visiting the United Nations Headquarters in New York in October 1995, had said that humanity had experienced uncertainty in the second half of the twentieth century about its future because of the threat of a nuclear war and that, although that danger appeared to have receded, the fear remained.

112. Public opinion was also to some extent apprehensive about the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, a concern that had been exacerbated by a number of incidents at nuclear power plants, including the Chernobyl accident. The peaceful use of nuclear energy led people to ask why some scientific and technical developments could both serve mankind and turn against it seriously endangering the environment and all forms of life. Moreover, the more power man had, the greater his individual and collective responsibilities. The fear engendered by the nuclear age might lie at the root of a new kind of behaviour, namely a resolute commitment by man to respect himself, others and creation. Faced with

the most terrible and most universal threat ever known, mankind was becoming more aware of its responsibilities.

113. The Holy See had followed with close interest the international conference "One Decade After Chernobyl", held in April 1996 under the sponsorship of the Agency, the European Commission and the World Health Organization, whose aim was to learn from the accident, to promote scientific studies of its consequences and to encourage the adoption of appropriate measures for those whose health had suffered or who were facing serious economic, social and environmental hardships.

114. Furthermore the Holy See noted with satisfaction the commitment laid down in the Moscow Nuclear Safety and Security Summit declaration (19-20 April 1996) to give an absolute priority to safety in the use of nuclear energy and shared the conviction that nuclear safety had to prevail over all other considerations. His delegation reiterated its support for all initiatives aimed at fostering a global nuclear safety culture by, in the first place, elaborating conventions, safety codes and standards for nuclear installations, and also by organizing seminars and symposia on that topic. The Convention on Nuclear Safety constituted a step in the right direction.

115. Regarding a convention on radioactive waste management, the Holy See hoped that it would cover not only radioactive waste from civil, but also from military activities. Continuing efforts to promote a nuclear safety culture should serve as a model for other industrial sectors.

116. It was crucial that information on all to do with the peaceful use of nuclear energy was transparent and objective. Fair and open dialogue on its advantages and limitations as well as on better ways of producing sufficient energy was also necessary.

117. The recent conference on the Chernobyl accident had shown that the total lack of information in the immediate post-accident phase had had very damaging consequences. Even now, the local population in the regions affected seemed to have no faith in what the authorities were telling them. The lack of information, or even disinformation, had probably reinforced the new chronic environmental stress syndrome identified among

victims. In that respect the media bore a heavy responsibility; on the one hand, they had an obligation to provide information about the real harm and risks involved while, on the other, it was their duty not to instigate unnecessary fear.

118. The ultimate goal of the proposed new measures for the Agency's safeguards system was increased trust between States. That would certainly bring about benefits in the context of non-proliferation and contribute towards nuclear disarmament. It was clear that some of the new measures would demand efforts on the part of Member States, which would have to surrender some of their sovereignty to the Agency. It was to be hoped that the States which had not concluded comprehensive safeguards agreements would also apply the new measures.

119. The Holy See commended the Agency for its part in the conclusion of treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones in Latin America and the Caribbean, in Africa, in South-East Asia and in the South Pacific and hoped that other regions would follow suit.

120. The review of progress, limitations and sometimes failures in human activities ought to help prevent certain types of development turning against mankind. In his address to the General Assembly in October 1995, Pope John Paul II had recalled that the Creator had endowed human beings with the capacity for wisdom and virtue and that difficulties and uncertainties could be overcome by responsibility and solidarity. In that context, he renewed the Pope's appeal made on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Chernobyl accident, for international solidarity for the many victims of the accident, particularly the children.

121. Mr. van EBBENHORST TENGBERGEN (Netherlands) said that for 40 years the Agency had been working ever harder to promote and ensure the safe use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Its activities had become increasingly relevant from the environmental as well as the political standpoint to the international community. He congratulated the Agency on its fortieth anniversary and hoped that it would continue to intensify its activities for the well-being of mankind. He fully endorsed the statement made by the delegate of Ireland on behalf of the European Union.

122. At the time of the 39th session of the General Conference in 1995, the NPT had just been extended with the adoption of a new document entitled "Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament", reformulating the agenda for the years to come. It had been clear that the Agency would have an important role to play in that process and that there was much to be done. While significant progress had already been made the work was by no means complete.

123. The conclusion of the CTBT, which had been adopted the previous week by the United Nations General Assembly by an overwhelming majority, had been by far the most important contribution to non-proliferation. The Treaty, which would be opened for signature the following week, would strengthen global nuclear non-proliferation and contribute to nuclear disarmament in the spirit of Article VI of the NPT. His delegation called on all States to accede to the CTBT to ensure its earliest possible entry into force.

124. The Agency's safeguards system, another important factor in nuclear non-proliferation, was in the process of being strengthened considerably. Events in Iraq and the DPRK had highlighted the need for a more vigorous approach to verification. The main purpose of Programme 93+2 was to build as complete a picture as possible of a State's nuclear activities, facilitating the detection of inconsistencies and, hence, of undeclared nuclear activities. That was essential for strengthening international peace and security.

125. Part 1 of Programme 93+2 was already being implemented and his delegation was looking forward to the first results. The Part 2 measures, which required complementary legal authority, had been a central focus of the Board's activities over the past year. His delegation applauded the Board's decision to establish a committee to develop a draft protocol, work on which had begun in July. There was no doubt that, under the chairmanship of Mr. Walker, the committee, in which the Netherlands would continue to make an active contribution, would soon bring its work to a successful conclusion.

126. Strengthening of safeguards was an irreversible process. Negotiations with a view to a ban on the production of fissile material for explosive purposes and increased

safeguarding of civil and former military stockpiles of fissile material would accelerate progress and help make the safeguards system as comprehensive and universal as possible.

127. At the end of 1995, the Netherlands Minister of Economic Affairs had presented a White Paper on energy to Parliament, identifying the steps to be taken to achieve a more sustainable energy economy. There was a need to ensure a reliable long-term energy supply, while taking into account the climate problem. The main goals of the policy set out in the White Paper were to improve energy efficiency by a third in the following 25 years and raise the proportion of renewable energy sources in total primary energy consumption to 10% by the year 2020, thus stabilising CO_2 emissions at the 1990 level. Another objective was to open up the electricity and natural gas markets by limiting the role of the State. There were currently no plans for a reactor. However, the existing capability and expertise would be maintained to leave the options open for the following century.

128. Nuclear safety was a top priority for all members of the Agency. His delegation welcomed the forthcoming entry into force of the Convention on Nuclear Safety. The Netherlands hoped to be able to participate in the first meeting of the Contracting Parties to that Convention to be held at the beginning of 1997; preparatory work for that meeting was already well under way. In addition, considerable efforts had been made with a view to developing an international convention on the safety of radioactive waste management.

129. The Standing Committee on Liability for Nuclear Damage had made good progress over the past year. He hoped that the outstanding issues could be resolved at the Committee's next meeting in South Africa and that a diplomatic conference could be convened in 1997.

130. All those developments should contribute to the global safety culture, which was essential, not only for technical reasons, but also to maintain and increase public confidence in nuclear energy. He stressed the need for constant improvement and updating of safety standards and regulations. Nuclear safety was an ongoing process, and there might be a high price to pay for any lack of vigilance.

131. Technical assistance to developing Member States continued to be a main activity of the Agency. He commended the Secretariat's work in that area - carried out with the support of Member States - which undoubtedly contributed to economic and social development. The Netherlands would pay its pledged TCF contribution in full as in the past.

132. Although the Secretariat's efforts had once again prevented a crisis, the Agency's financial situation remained a cause for concern, both in respect of the Regular Budget and the extrabudgetary funding needed to carry out the Agency's statutory tasks. It was regrettable that so many Member States - including major donors - had not been able to meet their obligations. That situation could not continue. The Agency needed the resources to which it was entitled in order to continue its mission. He urged all Member States, both developed and developing countries, to pay their contributions in full. In the light of the financial situation, prioritization of the Agency's activities was essential.

133. In conclusion, he reaffirmed his country's intention to co-operate fully with Member States and the Secretariat to attain the Agency's objectives in the coming decades.

134. Mr. VAJDA (Hungary) welcomed the Republic of Moldova as a new member of the Agency and endorsed the statement made by Ireland on behalf of the European Union and associated countries, including Hungary.

135. One year previously, the delegates to the General Conference had expressed their strong belief that the indefinite and unconditional extension of the NPT not only constituted a major step towards a more secure and stable world but also paved the way for a new system of international relations and for verification of the exclusively peaceful use of nuclear energy.

136. In its final document, the NPT Review and Extension Conference had urged the Conference on Disarmament to complete the negotiations on the CTBT by 1996 at the latest. That goal had been met and the Treaty was open for signature. Hungary fully supported what it viewed as a very important document and looked forward to its early entry into force. The Treaty would constitute a new landmark in the process of freeing the

world from nuclear explosions and effectively preventing any diversion of nuclear materials from peaceful uses into weapons-related activities. Hungary hoped that meaningful co-operation would rapidly develop between the Agency and the organization for implementing the CTBT that was shortly to be established.

137. The NPT Review and Extension Conference held in 1995 had unanimously reaffirmed that the Agency was the competent authority for verifying compliance with the safeguards agreements. From the outset, Hungary had supported the Agency's efforts to develop a stronger safeguards system better able to detect undeclared nuclear activities. Hungary was implementing the Part 1 measures of Programme 93+2 and welcomed the progress made in the drafting of an additional protocol. It was to be hoped that the process would soon be completed in the overall interest of the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

138. His Government had consistently supported the measures taken by the Agency to ensure full implementation of the Security Council resolutions regarding Iraq. It commended the Agency's rigorous implementation of its plan for the ongoing monitoring and verification of Iraq's compliance with its obligations and encouraged the Agency to adhere to that course.

139. With regard to the DPRK, Hungary noted with satisfaction that the Agency's technical team had been allowed to carry out certain safeguards activities. The provisions of the safeguards agreement had not, however, been fully implemented and Hungary called on the DPRK to co-operate with the Agency so that it could perform all the required activities.

140. Illicit trafficking in nuclear materials remained on the international community's agenda. Although responsibility lay primarily with governments, the crucial importance of continued close co-operation between Member States and of the Agency's role in that regard was incontestable. The Hungarian delegation noted with satisfaction that the Agency's database on illicit trafficking was already operational. Hungary had already provided relevant information and encouraged the States concerned to follow suit.

141. Radioactivity was as old as the universe but it was not until its discovery only a century previously that the nuclear age had been ushered in. While radioactivity had been glorified during the first 50 years of the nuclear saga and had often been considered as a panacea, it was now viewed with some doubt by the general public. To understand why that initial enthusiasm had turned into fear and anxiety, one had only to call to mind a tragic anniversary, the tenth anniversary of the Chernobyl accident which had seriously undermined public confidence. The lessons of the past should serve to intensify efforts to increase nuclear safety and transparency. He commended the Agency's work in that regard which had led to the development of important international conventions.

142. The entry into force of the Convention on Nuclear Safety was an important achievement resulting from the tireless efforts of Member States under the auspices of the Agency. The Convention would promote transparency, safety culture and international co-operation in nuclear safety. Hungary, which had already ratified the Convention in 1995, was prepared for its implementation and looked forward to the preparatory meeting of the Contracting Parties.

143. Hungary was pleased with the progress made in drafting a convention on the safety of radioactive waste management, which was generating much public interest. Implementation of Hungary's domestic waste management programme was well under way. By the end of the year, a possible site for a final disposal facility for low- and intermediate-level waste would be selected for further investigation and the construction of a concrete modular vault interim dry storage facility for spent fuel would be completed.

144. Recent developments in the revision of the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage were promising; the main issues had been clarified and good progress had been made in drafting a supplementary funding convention. Hungary considered that supplementary funding should be covered by all countries, regardless of whether they operated nuclear power plants, and should be accessible to all victims of nuclear accidents without discrimination. Those legal instruments - together with the separate attachment for States that were not parties to the Vienna Convention or the Paris Convention - constituted

a full international civil liability regime. The Hungarian delegation anticipated that the Standing Committee on Liability for Nuclear Damage would successfully conclude its activities and that a diplomatic conference would take place the following year.

145. The safety of all nuclear energy applications was a key issue in Hungary and was one of the main objectives of the new bill on atomic energy before the Parliament. The basic principles of the bill complied fully with the provisions of the relevant international agreements, as well as the recommendations and directives of the Agency, the OECD/NEA and the European Union. The bill also specified responsibilities for radioactive waste management and the corresponding sources of funding. With regard to nuclear liability, it confirmed that the licensee was liable for all nuclear damage and could be exempted from liability only in cases specified by the law. A new development with respect to the nuclear energy law currently in force was that the responsibility of the licensee and the State was subject to limits consonant with the amounts foreseen in the draft revised Vienna Convention.

146. The new law called for the publication of a large number of implementing orders and for reform of the entire regulatory system. As in most industrialized countries, a modern legal basis would be established as soon as the process had been completed.

147. Safety had been viewed as an overriding priority since the commissioning of the Paks nuclear power plant. Hungarian policy was based on a commitment to enhancing safety, to identifying factors that undermined safety and to constantly improving safety and safety culture.

148. In accordance with international practice, the Hungarian regulations provided for a periodic review of the safety of nuclear facilities. Such a review was currently being carried out in the first two units of the Paks nuclear power plant. A comprehensive schedule of safety upgrading measures to be implemented during the next two to five years would also be drawn up in the context of the review. Moreover, in the framework of the Agency's extrabudgetary programme, a mission would be organized for November 1996 to review and assess the safety upgrading process at the Paks plant. Hungary was strongly in

favour of the continuation of the extrabudgetary programme, which should in future include among its main aims the strengthening of the capability of national regulatory bodies.

149. An important project in recent years had been the seismic re-evaluation of the Paks site. It had received support from the Agency and the European Union's PHARE programme.

150. The Agency's technical co-operation programme continued to be of major importance to Hungary. His country therefore strongly supported the new initiatives developed partly by the newly established SAGTAC: fewer but better projects, partnership in development, and extension of the Model Project concept. Although it was not the Agency's role to maintain the nuclear infrastructure established with its assistance, it could do much to promote international co-operation with the national institutions concerned, for instance through an extended research contract programme. Co-operation with the Agency itself was of great value because its international reputation could help to promote public acceptance of nuclear technology in all countries.

151. As Hungary had for years been a beneficiary of the Agency's technical co-operation programme, it could vouch for the effectiveness of the new approach to project management, for example in the implementation of its Model Project on strengthening training for operational safety at the Paks nuclear power plant, which was considered a success story.

152. In view of the favourable results of the Agency's technical co-operation programme, his Government intended to pay a voluntary contribution to the Agency's TCF for 1997 in an amount corresponding to its share of the target.

153. The nuclear saga was far from over. However, society should develop a more realistic approach to radioactivity. To that end, vigorous and judicious action should be taken to strengthen and expand co-operation. However plain it seemed that radioactivity had proved a valuable tool with useful applications in many areas of science, technology and medicine and that nuclear energy was essential for sustainable economic development,

there was still a need to put across that message honestly and frequently to the general public. Hungary was determined to assist the Agency in that endeavour.

154. Mr. WALKER (Australia), having welcomed approval of the Republic of Moldova for membership of the Agency, said that the series of decisions which had accompanied the indefinite extension of the NPT had given the international community an exacting agenda for further promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and non-proliferation. The Agency, which was responsible for the implementation of a substantial share of that agenda, had made good progress during the past year. The NPT Review and Extension Conference had foreseen an increased role for the Agency in a number of fields related to nuclear non-proliferation, including the strengthening of safeguards, the promotion of technical co-operation, nuclear safety, the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones and efforts to combat illicit trafficking in nuclear materials and technology.

155. Australia continued to support strongly the activities of the Department of Technical Co-operation and valued the Agency's contribution in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology. The maintenance of Australia's contribution to the TCF for 1997 was a significant achievement given that the Australian Government had had to make drastic cuts in its appropriations for international and bilateral aid for 1996 and 1997 in order to achieve its fiscal reform objectives. Australia remained committed to effective multilateral aid mechanisms as complementary components of its overall aid policy. Future Australian funding would be guided by its own aid objectives and by the performance and effectiveness of aid programmes and institutions.

156. The Agency was well placed on the basis of those criteria; it had a well defined and worthwhile role to play in technical co-operation. To ensure both the continued success of its technical co-operation programme and secure funding, the Agency should carry on designing programmes which met priority needs and produced significant development impact. Australia had been pleased to be able to contribute, through its participation in the Country Programme Framework (CPF) review team, to improvements in the country

programming and project development processes of the Department of Technical Co-operation. Subject to competing priorities, it would continue to co-operate in that manner with the Department of Technical Co-operation. The Agency was committed to reform and was to be commended for its concerted efforts to improve technical co-operation programming and evaluation.

157. The year 1997 would mark the 25th anniversary of the RCA, which had been most successful in developing and promoting nuclear science and technology in Asia and the Pacific region. The extension of that agreement should allow the scientific and technological community of the region to play an increasingly important role. Concurrently with the extension of the RCA, the parties had undertaken a review of the management arrangements for the RCA. The recommendations of that review, which would be discussed at the 25th General Conference meeting of the RCA Member States to be held during the week, would help the RCA meet its objectives. The RCA, which had never remained static, was always striving for improvements in order to deliver the best results to Member States in the most efficient, effective and appropriate manner. The use of TCDC and the proposal to identify regional resource units were just two examples of the strong regional character of the Agreement and the emphasis on the utilization of developing country expertise in its programme of activities.

158. Australia was also interested in the proposal made by the Philippines to establish an "ASIATOM". It looked forward to detailed consultations with the Philippines and other interested countries.

159. His country was strongly committed to the early implementation of a strengthened, credible, effective and efficient safeguards regime, which was vital to the confidence-building essential for national, regional and international security. It was firmly convinced that if the existing safeguards system was to serve Member States' security interests into the twenty-first century it required considerable strengthening to enable it to detect undeclared activities. The central element of that regime would be the model protocol currently being negotiated by the legal drafting committee. The draft model protocol contained in

document GOV/2863 provided a reasonable and realistic balance between the interests of Member States to protect, on the one hand, their security through a strengthened safeguards system and, on the other, their commercial interests. It would be erroneous for States to view that as a contest between the rights of States and the rights of the Agency - the Agency was only acting on behalf of the States themselves. States should appreciate that the safeguards system ensured their national security above all. Protection of their commercial interests should not jeopardize the achievement of their national security objectives. If the common objective was to enhance national, regional and international security by strengthening the effectiveness and improving the efficiency of the safeguards system, it was crucial that the provisions of the draft model protocol not be diluted in the drafting process to upset that delicate balance. As one of the world's major uranium suppliers, Australia attached fundamental importance to an effective safeguards system which made such exports possible. Such a system was also essential for other exporters of nuclear material, equipment and technology.

160. He thanked the Secretariat for its energetic, imaginative and constructive work in assisting Member States to strengthen the safeguards system and for its initiative in holding a "Safeguards Afternoon" on 18 September to discuss Programme 93+2. He urged Member States with sizeable nuclear industries which had participated in the Programme 93+2 trials to share their experiences with the other members of the Agency to demonstrate how those measures would make the safeguards system not only more effective but also more efficient.

161. An important outcome of the NPT Review and Extension Conference had been the call for the early negotiation and conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. The adoption by an overwhelming majority on 10 September 1996 of a draft resolution introduced to the United Nations General Assembly by Australia, with the co-sponsorship of 127 United Nations Member States, had clearly demonstrated that the international community considered the CTBT to be an essential step towards a nuclear-weapon-free world. The CTBT would be opened for signature on 24 September and the Agency would

have a central role in ensuring that the important progress made over the past 18 months - the indefinite extension of the NPT and the adoption of the CTBT - was consolidated.

162. The Australian Government deeply appreciated the assistance provided by the Agency's Director General and his senior staff for the meeting in August 1996 to discuss verification issues with the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. It considered that the Commission's report made a significant contribution to practical efforts towards nuclear disarmament and would transmit it to the United Nations General Assembly and to the Conference on Disarmament.

163. Other non-proliferation and disarmament related issues directly relevant to the Agency's mandate had gained greater prominence since the NPT Review and Extension Conference, notably the management of surplus plutonium and HEU from dismantled weapons, and the proliferation threat posed by the potential for illicit trafficking in nuclear materials and technology. His delegation was pleased that the G-8 Moscow Nuclear Safety and Security Summit in April had addressed those issues in some detail.

164. Australia strongly supported the Agency's role in implementing both the freeze on the DPRK's nuclear programme and the Agreed Framework in order to find a permanent solution to the DPRK nuclear issue. Although pleased with the way in which the Agreed Framework had been implemented to date, Australia was concerned that the DPRK had not yet allowed the Agency to put in place measures for protecting information to enable it to verify in due course the correctness and completeness of the DPRK's initial declaration. He hoped that those matters would be resolved without delay during the next round of technical discussions.

165. The 1995 General Conference had adopted a resolution concerning the resumption of nuclear testing by some States, which inter alia called on those States to monitor all nuclear test sites scrupulously and to inform the Agency of any adverse impact arising from such testing. Following the adoption of that resolution, the Agency had overseen the creation of an International Advisory Committee on the Study of the Radiological Situation at the Atolls of Mururoa and Fangataufa. In document GC(40)/INF/4 the Secretariat had

advised delegates that that Committee, which included a representative of the South Pacific Forum and the Executive Director of the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organization (ANSTO), had commenced its work and was expected to report to the Agency and the public in early 1998. Australia welcomed the support and assistance provided to the Committee by the French Government. At the 27th meeting of the South Pacific Forum in Majuro, Marshall Islands, at the beginning of September, the South Pacific Heads of Government had expressed appreciation for the co-operation given to the project thus far by the French authorities and had noted that the study was being conducted in line with the aims expressed by the Forum countries in the August 1995 Declaration of South Pacific Environment Ministers. Australia also welcomed the Agency's work in relation to other test sites, as reported at the present session of the General Conference by the Director General.

166. His country was particularly pleased that the United States of America, France and the United Kingdom had signed the protocols to the Rarotonga Treaty in July 1996. It was also pleased that the Convention on Nuclear Safety would enter into force on 24 October 1996 and was confident that the Convention would contribute significantly, particularly through its peer review system, to enhancing the safety of the nuclear industry worldwide. Australia had almost completed its domestic ratification procedures and its ratification instrument should be deposited before the end of the year.

167. Australia welcomed the recent endorsement by the Board of Governors of the revised Regulations for the Safe Transport of Radioactive Material and the progress made in the elaboration of a convention on the safety of radioactive waste management. Those who had been present at the negotiations knew that all participants had approached the issues in an open and constructive manner. Australia was particularly pleased that, as a result of an initiative by the Government of South Africa, significant efforts would be made to raise consciousness about safety issues in Africa at the following meeting of experts on the draft convention. That initiative should help broaden participation in the negotiations, a beneficial development for all States involved in the handling of radioactive waste.

168. His country was pleased that broad agreement finally seemed to have been reached on a new supplementary funding convention in the area of liability for nuclear damage. Although some details, including one or two important issues of principle, remained to be cleared up at the forthcoming session of the Standing Committee on Liability for Nuclear Damage in October, he hoped that the convention would be adopted at a diplomatic conference in 1997.

169. Nuclear export controls were an essential component of the international non-proliferation regime and usefully complemented the Agency's safeguards system. Such controls served the aims of the NPT and the treaties on nuclear-weapon-free zones by helping to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and facilitating co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

170. At the NPT Review and Extension Conference in 1995, the parties to the NPT had adopted a decision on "Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament" in which they called for the promotion of transparency in nuclear-related export controls within the framework of dialogue and co-operation. In the same decision, they also called for preferential treatment for non-nuclear-weapon States party to the Treaty in the promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear energy, taking the needs of developing countries particularly into account, and for the application of full-scope Agency safeguards to all new supply arrangements for nuclear material and technology, a principle that Australia had been endeavouring for some years to have officially adopted by the parties to the NPT. Pursuant to a decision adopted at the plenary meeting of the Nuclear Suppliers' Group in April 1996, Australia was co-ordinating a working group on transparency issues that would adopt a work programme in response to the decision of the NPT Review and Extension Conference.

171. Domestically, ANSTO had continued to play a significant role in the generation of new knowledge through focused research and the delivery of a range of services based on nuclear science and technology. It had increased its activities in such areas as safety culture, radioactive waste management and the use of nuclear technology to solve

environmental problems. Much of ANSTO's scientific activity was conducted in co-operation with institutions around the globe. The Synroc programme was one area of research in which collaborators from many institutions were involved; ANSTO was currently developing processes that would allow the use of Synroc in parallel with, or complementary to, the use of glass as matrices for wastes arising from the reprocessing of spent fuel and for the disposal of a wider range of wastes from the defence industry. ANSTO and the Australian Radiation Laboratory provided the Agency with experts in a number of areas, including the Mururoa study. The Australian Radiation Laboratory was supervising the clean-up and decontamination of radioactive sites, drawing on its experience at the former British nuclear weapons test sites at Maralinga in South Australia.

172. Australia was strongly committed to the Agency as an effective organization, functioning in accordance with its Statute and paying particular attention to its safeguards tasks and its scientific and technical role. During the year ahead, Australia would support the Director General and his staff in completing some of the Agency's major tasks, including the strengthening of safeguards, continuing improvement of the design and delivery of technical co-operation projects, promotion of nuclear safety, environmental monitoring, the drawing up of sound waste and transportation standards, and the management of fissile material from dismantled weapons.

173. In 1997 the Agency would celebrate its 40th anniversary, an occasion that should provide food for reflection on its future role and what the international community expected from it. Outstanding leadership and expertise had enabled the Agency to rise to many challenges but, like any other major enterprise, it must continue to modernize its working methods for the twenty-first century in order to continue to meet security and development needs in a climate of increasing financial stringency. In doing so, it was important to bear in mind the exceptional status of the Agency within the family of international organizations as it combined the day-to-day delivery, at a very reasonable cost, of regional and global security with the provision of highly sophisticated technical assistance and fulfilment of a development function conducive to economic and social security.

174. In conclusion, he announced that his country would pledge 1.29 million Australian dollars to the TCF for 1997, a sum that corresponded to its share of the target.

175. Mr. KIENER (Switzerland), speaking also on behalf of the delegation of Liechtenstein, welcomed the Republic of Moldova as a new member and thanked the Agency for the conference it had organized on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Chernobyl accident, a conference which had enabled the international community to form an accurate picture of the consequences of the accident and to learn lessons from it for the future.

176. In 1997 the United Nations General Assembly was to devote a special session to Agenda 21, adopted at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. He was pleased to note that the Agency was following preparations for that session closely, and was planning to report to it on the work it had carried out, particularly relating to the comparative assessment of possible options for electricity generation.

177. Switzerland was in favour of a global non-proliferation policy based on international treaties which were implemented worldwide. Efforts to ensure transparency would not suffice if the nuclear States did not undertake to embark on a policy of substantially reducing their nuclear arsenals in accordance with the spirit of the NPT. Switzerland also hoped that negotiations with a view to concluding a fissile material "cut-off" treaty would soon be initiated within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament. It welcomed the adoption on 10 September 1996 by the United Nations General Assembly of the CTBT, which Switzerland intended to sign.

178. His country strongly supported Programme 93+2, and had shown, by participating actively in trials of the remote monitoring system (RMS), that that system met the Agency's safeguards requirements. It was planned to install that system in all Swiss facilities, thus enabling substantial savings to be made.

179. Regarding Part 2 of the Programme, it was essential to be clear as to how the proposed measures were to be implemented, and to limit the list of equipment and materials placed under control.

180. In addition, Switzerland supported the Agency's request for broader access to information and facilities. However, he stressed that all nuclear-weapon States, as well as States which had concluded INFCIRC/66-type agreements, should undertake not only to provide the information requested but also to make any additional commitments which could help increase the effectiveness of safeguards on their territory.

181. Another of the Agency's tasks was to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Major problems connected with world population growth and future world needs were beginning to arise, as shown, for instance, in the Agency's programmes for dealing with water shortages. If those problems were to be resolved, ways of producing power would have to be found which were economical, environment-friendly, and not liable to exacerbate international relations. Nuclear energy could provide interesting answers to those questions, and, to prove it, the Agency should take active steps to promote new technologies which were safe, not - or less - conducive to nuclear weapons proliferation, and which made the best use of available resources.

182. Some research was being carried out with a view to producing fuels which posed very little proliferation risk and were able to be used in current reactors. Other research was aimed at developing new technologies. At the 1994 General Conference, a group of top-level scientists had met to consider the advantages of a reactor associated with an accelerator. Those advantages were numerous, in terms both of operational safety and of reducing proliferation risks.

183. As could be seen, there were many avenues to be explored, and those who supported an increase in co-operation and technical assistance could perhaps find common ground with those who favoured strengthening of safeguards, with a view to effective and positive collaboration.

184. The nuclear energy situation in Switzerland had not changed much in the course of the past year. The country was still to a considerable extent dependent on nuclear energy for its electricity supplies (39% in 1995). At the political level, nuclear power was still being legally contested, although the construction of nuclear plants had been suspended

under a moratorium which ran until the year 2000. In addition, assuming a lifetime of 40 years, the three oldest reactors would have to be replaced in the year 2010. For the time being, that was unlikely to happen not only because of the moratorium but above all because of the unfavourable political climate.

185. To ensure the country's future power supplies, the Swiss Government was holding talks with the chief protagonists in the debate on energy policy. The future of nuclear energy was central to those discussions. He hoped that a solid political platform regarding Switzerland's future power supplies would emerge.

186. The Swiss Government had taken some important decisions with regard to radioactive waste management. It had authorized the construction of an interim waste storage centre, and, with the backing of the safety authorities, had authorized continuation of a low- and intermediate-level waste storage facility construction project despite the fact that the population of the canton concerned had opposed authorization of a final repository in a referendum organized in 1995. The next stage, which would be decisive, would be to conduct a new referendum asking the population of the canton to decide for or against the construction of a pilot gallery. The management of low- or intermediate-level waste was still, as in the past, much more a political than a technical issue.

187. Switzerland, like most States, was confronted by a drop in financial resources, and was therefore seeking possible ways of reducing its deficit. That was why it had resisted when the Agency had proposed an increased budget, despite the fact that the increase was covered by a reappraisal of over-prudent income estimates. While Switzerland could accept the proposed budget for 1997, it strongly urged the Director General to ensure when preparing the 1998 budget that the contributions of Member States remained the same in real terms as in 1996.

188. On 22 August 1996, Switzerland had ratified the Convention on Nuclear Safety; he welcomed the fact that the Convention was to enter into force on 24 October 1996, since it would strengthen the nuclear safety mechanism to which Switzerland attached great importance.

189. The progress achieved on drafting a convention on the safety of radioactive waste management was also welcome. The negotiation process was currently at a stage which required a detailed approach, and the forthcoming meetings would enable common positions to be adopted after specific points had been dealt with.

190. In that connection, Switzerland considered that spent fuel ought to be brought within the scope of the convention, provided that its subsequent use had not been determined and no corresponding conversion undertaken. Although the negotiation process might seem slow, the quality of the future convention depended on it. Switzerland anticipated that the final draft of the convention would be completed by spring 1997, and hoped that it would be opened for signature at the 41st session of the General Conference.

191. Mr. HÖGBERG (Sweden) welcomed approval of the Republic of Moldova as a new member of the Agency and associated himself with the statement made by Ireland on behalf of the European Union. For Sweden, the NPT was the key both to non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. Non-proliferation efforts alone could not guarantee international peace and security; they had to be supplemented by verifiable disarmament measures involving all the nuclear-weapon States. Sweden urged all States to accede to the NPT to make it truly universal.

192. His country welcomed the adoption of the CTBT by the United Nations General Assembly. The Treaty was another decisive step towards non-proliferation and Sweden urged all States to sign it. Efforts should now be intensified towards nuclear disarmament through multilateral and bilateral negotiations. The early conclusion of a cut-off treaty for weapons-grade fissile material was a good example of what should be aimed for in that respect.

193. Although encouraged by the increasing number of parties to the NPT and the substantial progress made in the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, Sweden remained very concerned that certain countries were not complying with their safeguards obligations. It strongly supported all efforts contributing to full transparency with regard to the DPRK's nuclear programme. Sweden was also greatly concerned that Iraq had tried to

impose conditions on UNSCOM's efforts to implement relevant Security Council resolutions. Sweden commended the Agency for the work it had carried out in co-operation with UNSCOM to trace and eliminate Iraq's nuclear weapons potential and welcomed the measures taken to ensure long-term monitoring and verification.

194. The Iraq experience confirmed the need for a more effective safeguards system. Sweden had taken an active part in work to that end, including the initiation of Programme 93+2 for strengthening the Agency's safeguards system and improving its efficiency. It welcomed the progress made, and the fact that work now focused on drafting the protocol required to give the Agency access to additional information and locations. Sweden supported the strengthening measures contained in document GOV/2863 and all the more so in the light of the positive results of its participation in field trials of several elements of those measures, which had shown that there was no undesirable impact on the normal operation of the nuclear facilities concerned. It urged all Member States to co-operate in a constructive manner so that the committee responsible for drafting the protocol could present a text to the meeting of the Board of Governors in December 1996.

195. Sweden welcomed the fact that the Convention on Nuclear Safety would enter into force on 24 October and urged all Member States, especially those with operating nuclear power plants, to accede to the Convention as soon as possible to ensure that the first review meeting was truly comprehensive.

196. His country had taken note of the valuable work currently being carried out on the drafting of a convention on the safety of radioactive waste and on the safety of spent fuel management. It was important for the convention to have the broadest possible scope and to include spent fuel and military waste. The General Conference should give its continued support to the work of the expert group and its Chairman, Mr. Baer, so that a draft could be submitted to a diplomatic conference in 1997.

197. In the development of the nuclear fuel cycle and the use of radioisotopes for medical, industrial, and other purposes, Member States should always consider safety and environmental aspects before taking action. The Convention on Nuclear Safety, which was

about to enter into force, and the convention on the safety of radioactive waste and on the safety of spent fuel management, now in an advanced state of preparation, were both good examples of how Member States were endeavouring to reach international agreement on such aspects. Yet another example was the new Basic Safety Standards adopted in 1995. It was also important that the Agency itself comply with its Statute and apply those environmental standards to its own activities, in particular within its technical co-operation programme. Within the joint IAEA/NEA Uranium Group more attention should be paid to the safety and environmental problems associated with uranium mining, in line with the Agency's commitment to contribute to sustainable development.

198. Sweden would pledge its full share of the TCF target for 1997 in recognition of the importance it attached to the Agency's technical co-operation activities. It supported and appreciated the Agency's efforts to co-ordinate its activities with bilateral co-operation in such areas of mutual interest as nuclear safety, radiation protection and State systems of accounting for and control of nuclear material.

199. With regard to the Agency's accounts for 1995, he noted with satisfaction that the Agency had acted on most of the recommendations made by the External Auditor in recent years. He commended the outgoing External Auditor both for the professionalism he had shown and his valuable contribution to the effective and efficient performance of the Agency, and wished the new External Auditor the same success.

The meeting rose at 7.00 p.m.